

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2005 – 2010

Strategies for managing Rural Development are an integral component of the strategic plan. They identify internal objectives, strategies and performance measurements that support achieving Rural Development's two external-focused goals. Their inclusion supports transparency and accountability for performance across all levels of Rural Development.

Management Strategies (MS)

Rural Development is committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resources management and program delivery. It promotes progressive, entrepreneurial and innovative thinking. It encourages employees to develop and share new ideas to effectively and efficiently promote and deliver its mission. Employees will be recognized and rewarded through an open and accountable performance system. We will work to proactively prevent discrimination by providing information and solutions to internal and external customers that will help identify and solve problems.

MS 1 - Improve the visibility and availability of Rural Development programs

Strategies

- Implement the President's Management Agenda related to electronic government (eGov).
- Implement Rural Development's marketing plan which enhances outreach, marketing and partnering activities for the delivery of Rural Development's programs.
- Develop annual marketing plans, at the program and state level, to ensure all potential applicants are aware of Rural Development's programs.
- Give rural residents convenient and full access to all forms for Rural Development assistance through electronic media (eGov).

Performance Measures

Provide access to Rural Development forms through electronic media.

Baseline: 2003 -- 140 Rural Development forms met Departmental guidelines for access through electronic media (eGov).

Target: 2010 -- All identified Rural Development forms meet Departmental guidelines for access through electronic media (eGov).

Increase the number of Rural Development programs that are eGov compliant.

Baseline: 2003 -- No Rural Development loan program has been incorporated into the eGov strategy.

Target: 2010 -- All identified Rural Development Loan and Grant programs are eGov compliant.



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Ensure outreach to all potential program recipients.

Baseline: 2003 -- No program or state marketing plans developed.

Target: 2010 -- Annual marketing plans developed for all programs and by all states.

MS 2 - Increase efficiency of program and administrative management

Strategies

- Implement the President's Management Agenda related to budget and performance integration, outsourcing and financial management.
- Evaluate programs and integrate the results of those evaluations into the budget decision-making process.
- Integrate Rural Development program data with relevant outside data sources to provide a systematic means to review performance information during all stages of the budget process.
- Develop the capability to monitor the cost-effectiveness of program delivery.
- Continuously monitor financial management activities to strengthen fiscal accountability.
- Improve service delivery through automation of business processes into effective and efficient state-of-the-art information systems.
- Enhance the financial program application process to improve financial reporting procedures and continue to develop systems that will enhance the integrity of financial and administrative data.

Performance Measures

Improve the effectiveness of Rural Developments programs.

Baseline: 2003 -- Of the six Rural Development's programs which have been evaluated under the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), one program has been identified as "Effective".

Target: 2010 -- Of those Rural Development programs which have been evaluated under the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), all programs have been identified as "Effective".

Baseline: 2003 -- Limited ability to assess the cost of delivering and servicing each Rural Development program.

Target: 2010 -- A methodology developed to assess the cost of delivering and servicing each Rural Development program.

Provide accurate and timely interest rate information in support of programs and administrative offices.

Baseline: 2003 -- Achieved 95% of scheduled milestones and deadlines.

Target: 2010 -- Achieve 100% of scheduled milestones and deadlines.



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Increase the number of adverse program decisions that go to mediation and complete them within 85 calendar days.

Baseline: 2003 -- With over 600 adverse program decisions, 97 adverse decisions went to mediation and 96 percent of those were completed within 85 calendar days.

Target: 2010 -- Increase by 25% the total number of adverse program decisions that go to mediation and close at least 96 percent within 85 calendar days.

Ensure Rural Development's internal controls are effective.

Baseline: 2003 -- All Management Control Reviews (MCR) were conducted in accordance with the 5-year plan for all assessable units within Rural Development.

Target: 2010 -- All Management Control Reviews (MCR) are conducted in accordance with the 5-year plan for all assessable units within Rural Development.

Baseline: 2003 -- All internal control process reviews were conducted in accordance with the 5-year plan and all recommendations are being monitored until closure.

Target: 2010 -- Conduct internal control process reviews in accordance with the 5-year plan and monitor all recommendations until closure.

Ensure automated systems are secure and compliant.

Baseline: 2003 -- A remedial plan is in place to correct all security deficiencies and material weaknesses identified in audit reports and independent reviews of the automated systems.

Target: 2010 -- There are no unresolved, open material security weaknesses related to the automated information security systems.

Ensure fiscal responsibility in the expenditure of administrative funds.

Baseline: 2003 -- 100% compliance with the Anti-Deficiency Act.

Target: 2010 -- 100% compliance with the Anti-Deficiency Act.

Ensure that Rural Developments financial management systems and data are compliant.

Baseline: 2003 -- None of the financial management systems used by Rural Development meet Federal financial management system requirements and applicable Federal accounting standards.

Target: 2010 -- 100 percent of financial management systems used by Rural Development meet Federal financial management system requirements and applicable Federal accounting standards.

Baseline: 2003 -- Received an "unqualified audit opinion" on Rural Development's financial statement.

Target: 2010 -- Receive an "unqualified audit opinion" on Rural Development's financial statement.



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Modernize the procurement program while continuing to ensure it is responsible and in compliance.

Baseline: 2003 -- Rewrite Statements of Work (SOWs) in Performance Based Service Contract (PBSC) formats for 50% of new requirements greater than \$100,000.

Target: 2010 -- Rewrite SOW's in PBSC format for 70% of new requirements greater than \$100,000.

Baseline: 2003 -- Participate in the User Acceptance Testing of the interface between Integrated Acquisition System (IAS) and the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS) and in Type 60's/Program funded contracts planning for future deployment of IAS.

Target: 2010 -- Award 95% of Administrative-funded dollars through the USDA Integrated Acquisition System or similar automated procurement system.

Baseline: 2003 -- 50% of total dollar amount awarded to Small Business, 3% to 8(a) Businesses and 6% to Small Disadvantaged Businesses.

Target: 2010 -- Continue to achieve the established goals.

MS 3 - Improve human capital management

Strategies

- Implement the President's Management Agenda related to human capital planning.
- Implement Rural Development's human capital plan.
- Enhance policies and infrastructure to ensure civil rights and diversity initiatives are accomplished.
- Streamline complaint processing procedures to reduce complaint inventory.
- Increase equal employment opportunity management training to further diversity in the USDA Rural Development workforce.
- Improve conflict management by successfully resolving disputes and maintaining effective working relations through the use of mediation.
- Provide cross-training opportunities to support effective, coordinated delivery of Rural Development programs.
- Use workforce planning to recruit, retain and reward employees while developing an accountable, high-performing workforce.

Performance Measures

Encourage the use of student appointments as a recruiting tool.

Baseline: 2003 -- 275 student appointments were made.

Target: 2010 -- The number of student appointments will be increased by 10%.



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Improve workforce diversity.

Baseline: 2003 -- 8.6 percent of employees are Hispanic, Asian American/Pacific Islander and persons with targeted disabilities.

Target: 2010 -- Identified representation will be increased to 10.6 percent.

Modernize Rural Development's training program through the use of web-based training.

Baseline: 2003 -- None.

Target: 2010 -- Provide 1,000 web-based training opportunities.

Encourage prompt investigation of EEO complaints.

Baseline: 2003 -- 5 percent of EEO informal complaints were resolved (settled or dismissed) within 6 months.

Target: 2010 -- 20 percent of EEO informal complaints are resolved (settled or dismissed) within 6 months.

Baseline: 2003 -- No EEO formal complaints were investigated and distributed to the complainant within 6 months.

Target: 2010 -- 40 EEO formal complaints are investigated and distributed to the complainant within 6 months.

Encourage the use of mediation to promptly settle employee/workplace disputes.

Baseline: 2003 -- Of 23 employee/workplace disputes requesting mediation, 17 went to mediation and 15 of those were completed within 90 days.

Target: 2010 -- 75% increase in the number of reported employee/workplace conflicts that go to mediation and a 90% increase in the number completed within 90 days.



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